



# Fortifying Maine's Creativity & Culture Five-Year Cultural Plan: 2015-2020 Action Updates

*BACKGROUND: The current plan was approved in July 2015, after 18 months of what is possibly the most comprehensive planning process ever undertaken by the agency. The Maine Arts Commission publicly unveiled the plan at our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration in November 2015, and have kept it accessible to the public through multiple communications channels; incorporation in testimony to the Legislature; Partnership Grant visits to key constituents around the state; presentations to Rotary Clubs, local arts council gatherings, the press, etc.; and as the organizing principle for our biennial statewide conference, the Maine International Conference on the Arts. The following programs, activities, and accomplishments have been initiated and achieved since the plan's launch.*

## **PRIORITY #1: LEVERAGE INVESTMENT TO STRENGTHEN AND BETTER CAPITALIZE THE ARTS, CREATIVE, AND CULTURAL SECTOR**

- **State Appropriation Increases:** upon review of the Cultural Plan, Maine Governor Paul LePage recommended moving beyond the national average in per capita funding for the arts. While we've not reached that goal yet, we have seen steady increases in state funding.
- **Grants Program Reorganization:** As a result of this reorganization, more organizations have been provided grants and assistance from more parts of the state than had happened in many years. In FY16 we provided 111 grants totaling \$365,893. These grants generated an additional \$36.5 million in matching funds. 42 grants went to individual artists and 69 were provided to organizations. Funding for these grants is enhanced by funds from the Maine Community Foundation and the Betterment Fund. Total grants funded over the past three years exceed \$1.2 million.
- **ArtsEngageME, a 501c3 support organization, launched:** – see also **PRIORITY #5**. Many elements of this Plan hinge on the development of this organization, including the development of a statewide arts endowment.
- **Maine International Conference on the Arts 2016, Lewiston/Auburn,** structured around the plan's priorities, was a big success, attracting 30% more attendees than our first such conference.



- **New: Partnership Grant Program** includes site visits to each grantee to follow up on their application, define any new challenges, communicate about the Commission's priorities and any changes we are pursuing and provide any further assistance needed.
- **New: Technical Assistance** we have also been providing more Technical Assistance to organizations who request it through one-on-one consulting. As the awareness of the Commission as a professional resource increases, the field has increasingly reached out as they experience organizational shifts and crises. We assist with strategic planning, capital campaign development, board development, leadership transitions and more over the past two years. The development of a Peer to Peer Consulting Network is on our list of priorities over the next few years.

#### **PRIORITY #2: INCREASE AWARENESS**

- **SOCIAL MEDIA PROGRAM** has been developed and continues to grow.
- **NEW: STATEWIDE RESEARCH AND DATA COLLECTION.** For the first time, the Commission participated statewide in AFTA's AEP V study, and has contracted with DataArts to further tell our story. And also partnered with NEFA on their New England Creative Worker Survey.
- **MAINE'S 2020 BICENTENNIAL:** The Commission is partnering with the Cultural Affairs Council to develop a program strategy for the State's Bicentennial in 2020.
- **NEW: MAINE ARTS AWARDS.** In development through ArtsEngageME.

#### **PRIORITY #3: FOSTER ARTS EDUCATION & LIFELONG LEARNING**

#### **PRIORITY #4: BUILD ARTS & TOURISM SYNERGY**

- **PARTNERSHIP WITH OFFICE OF TOURISM:** The Commission participates and provides workshops for the OOT and the OOT developed and lead the Cultural Tourism track for MICA 2016.
- **TOURISM READY WORKSHOPS:** During the next year, the Commission will travel the state and provide additional information on how arts organizations can be "tourism ready," including how to access OOT's grants, best practices and guidelines.

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**PRIORITY #5: STRENGTHEN THE COMMISSION'S CAPACITY & STEWARDSHIP**

- **ArtsEngageME, a 501c3 support organization, launched.** As soon as the plan was approved, the Commission pursued emergency legislation to authorize its creation (required in this circumstance). This necessitated additional legislation to change statutory language to move the investment of an [arts endowment](#) from the State Treasury to an outside fund, which was also pursued. The Commission had the authorization to create an arts endowment for years, but never pursued it because of the State Treasury limitation. After significant legislative drama, the bills made it in to the session, were approved by the legislature, signed by the Governor and became law on July 29, 2016. We are currently putting together the board, paperwork and plan to move ArtsEngageME forward. This will be the vehicle for pursuing local, regional and national grants – inquiries and lists already being created – and potential Crowd Funding campaigns. The Endowment and Advocacy Councils will be developed over the course of the next year.
- **NEW CULTURAL SECTOR NETWORK** in development through our social media program and ArtsEngageME.
- **ANNUAL PLAN UPDATES** to be disseminated through statewide workshops, Partnership site visits, publications, social media, and more.

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